# Elections DA—TOC

## NC

### 1NC Shell

#### Dems win now in 2016

**Glueck 4-29**

Katie Glueck (contributor). “Insiders: Clinton would crush Trump in November.” Politico. April 29th, 2016. http://www.politico.com/story/2016/04/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-november-insiders-222598

In the swing states that matter most in the presidential race, Donald Trump doesn’t have a prayer against Hillary Clinton in the general election. That’s according to top operatives, strategists and activists in 10 battleground states who participated in this week’sa POLITICO Caucus. Nearly 90 percent of them said Clinton would defeat Trump in their home states in a November matchup. Republicans are only slightly more bullish on Trump’s prospects than Democrats: More than three-quarters of GOP insiders expect Clinton to best the Republican front-runner in a general-election contest in their respective states. Among Democrats, the belief is nearly universal: 99 percent of surveyed said will Clinton will beat Trump. In three of the biggest swing states — Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida — Republicans were particularly downbeat about the prospect of a Trump-Clinton contest. “There is positively no way for Trump to win in Pennsylvania,” said a Republican from that state. “Trump cannot and will not carry Ohio,” a Republican from that state insisted. “He will do well in Appalachia and in the Mahoning Valley, but he will get killed in the rest of the state. The danger for the GOP is losing Rob Portman, which is a very real possibility under this matchup.” Added a Florida Republican, who like all participants was granted anonymity in order to speak freely, “Trump is grinding the GOP to a stub. He couldn't find enough xenophobic, angry white Floridians to beat Hillary in Florida if he tried.” “I not only think [Hillary] will win Florida in November if Trump is the nominee, I think she'll win 30+ states,” said another Florida Republican. These comments follow two weeks of victories for Trump, who notched a major win in New York before going on to sweep the mid-Atlantic states on Tuesday. Looking ahead to the general election, Republican insiders fretted that if Trump is at the top of the ticket, he will not only lose in a landslide, but will also endanger Republicans on the rest of the ballot. “NH is potentially a swing state, but Hillary would win in a rout with profound downballot consequences,” wrote one New Hampshire Republican. Said a Virginia Republican, “Virginia has shifted to be more suburban than rural. While a Trump candidacy will gin up turnout in the Shenandoah Valley and Southwest, Trump will get killed in the suburbs of the urban crescent. Time to focus on Congressional races and 2017.” Several Democrats said Trump would so motivate Democratic turnout that they envisioned clear-cut pickup opportunities across the ballot. “In a Trump/Clinton matchup, Hillary will win Florida by no less than 5 points and will help the Democrats pick up a Senate seat, a couple of House districts, and a significant number of state legislative seats,” said one Florida Democrat. Added a North Carolina Democrat, “Hillary Clinton will put North Carolina back in the blue column. She will also have long coattails in North Carolina, helping Roy Cooper take back the Governor's Mansion and in quite possibly the biggest upset this cycle, help Deborah Ross defeat Senator Richard Burr.” Plenty of Democrats predicted a landslide victory over Trump in November. “This will be a near historic blowout, 20 percent at least,” a New Hampshire Democrat said.

**A handgun ban will face major public and GOP opposition**

**Scher 15**

Bill Scher (senior writer, Campaign for America’s Future). “Will Any Presidential Candidate Support Banning Handguns?” Common Dreams. October 3rd, 2015. http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/10/03/will-any-presidential-candidate-support-banning-handguns

Politicians generally avoid proposing handgun bans because the position doesn’t fit into the frame of exempting “responsible gun owners” from new regulations. No one needs an assault rifle to hunt or to protect themselves. But plenty of Americans keep handguns thinking that it will protect them from harm. **Politicians are loathe to advocate that the government “take their guns away.”** However, the reality is, as physicist David Robert Grimes put it, “actually owning and using a firearm hugely increases the risk of being shot.” Of course, **this is a political impossibility** for the foreseeable future. The current Republican Congress won’t even pass an expansion of background checks, and a previous Republican Congress allowed the Clinton-era assault weapons ban to expire. A handgun ban also could run afoul of the Supreme Court, as it is currently constituted.

#### Gun control is a major issue for the 2016 election—its unpopularity will get pinned to Democrats and cause GOP victory

**Tani 15**

Max Tani (staff writer). “The dark reason why guns are virtually guaranteed to be a major issue of the 2016 campaign.” Business Insider. July 29th, 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/gun-control-in-2016-election-2015-7>

After years of ducking presidential-campaign battles over gun laws out of fear of the powerful gun lobby, it appears that Democrats are finally ready to go on the offensive. Democrats are becoming more and more outspoken about gun violence in the wake of seemingly ever increasing mass shootings, despite the fact that the American public remains as opposed as ever to many gun-control measures. And the increase in mass shootings has guaranteed that candidates will have to address the issue on the campaign trail, setting it up to become a major issue in the 2016 presidential election. Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton, for example, set the tone early in her campaign after a mass shooting at a historically African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina. And she has become much more vocal in her calls for stricter gun laws, making it a recurring feature in her stump speeches. "This is a controversial issue. I am well aware of that. But I think it is the height of irresponsibility not to talk about it," Clinton said this week, according to The Washington Post. Clinton's increased calls for gun control mirror President Barack Obama's recent shift to refocus on gun laws in the wake of a slew of mass shootings. In addition to the Charleston incident, there have been high-profile mass shootings at military facilities in Tennessee and at a movie theater in Louisiana. Obama has labeled the failure of Congress to pass new gun laws the biggest frustration of his tenure. He has spoken out multiple times recently on the subject, including after the Charleston shooting that killed nine people. "I've had to make statements like this too many times," Obama said in a statement from the White House. "At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other developed countries." This is a major shift from 2008, when both Clinton and Obama were criticized for failing to talk about the issue. During the heat of the 2012 campaign, Obama was reluctant to bring up the topic of guns even after the mass shooting at a Colorado movie theater. Passing gun-control measures, Democrats have long argued, had helped lead Democrats to overwhelming losses in the 1994 midterms, which swept Republicans into power in Congress. The new focus, then, is an interesting political calculus — because many signs actually show that Americans' support for gun rights is growing.

#### GOP win causes extinction from warming

**Ferner 1-25**

--Cites Noam Chomsky, MIT professor emeritus of linguistics

Matt Ferner (national reporter). “Noam Chomsky Says GOP Is 'Literally A Serious Danger To Human Survival’.” Huffington Post. January 25th, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/noam-chomsky-gop\_us\_56a66febe4b0d8cc109aec78

Noam Chomsky, the noted radical and MIT professor emeritus, said the Republican Party has become so extreme in its rhetoric and policies that it poses a “serious danger to human survival.” “Today, the Republican Party has drifted off the rails,” Chomsky, a frequent critic of both parties, said in an interview Monday with The Huffington Post. “It’s become what the respected conservative political analysts Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein call ‘a radical insurgency’ that has pretty much abandoned parliamentary politics.” Chomsky cited a 2013 article by Mann and Ornstein published in Daedalus, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, analyzing the polarization of the parties. The authors write that the GOP has become “ideologically extreme, scornful of facts and compromise, and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition.” Chomsky said the GOP and its presidential candidates are “literally a serious danger to decent human survival” and cited Republicans' rejection of measures to deal with climate change, which he called a “looming environmental catastrophe.” All of the top Republican presidential candidates are either outright deniers, doubt its seriousness or insist no action should be taken -- “dooming our grandchildren,” Chomsky said. "I am not a believer," Donald Trump, the Republican presidential front-runner, said recently. "Unless somebody can prove something to me, I believe there’s weather." Trump isn’t alone. Although 97 percent of climate scientists insist climate change is real and caused by human actions, more than half of Republicans in Congress deny mankind has anything to do with global warming. "What they are saying is, let's destroy the world. Is that worth voting against? Yeah," Chomsky said in a recent interview with Mehdi Hasan on Al Jazeera English's "UpFront." The policies that the GOP presidential candidates and its representatives in Congress support, Chomsky argued, are in “abject service to private wealth and power,” despite “rhetorical posturing” of some, including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.). GOP proposals would effectively raise taxes on lower-income Americans and reduce them for the wealthy. Chomsky advised 2016 voters to cast their ballots strategically. He said the U.S. is essentially “one-party” system -- a business party with factions called Republicans and Democrats. But, he said, there are small differences between the factions that can make a “huge difference in systems of enormous power” -- like that afforded to the president. “I’ve always counseled strategic voting, Chomsky said. "Meaning, in a swing state, or swing congressional district, or swing school board, if there is a significant enough difference to matter, vote for the better candidate -- or sometimes the least bad.” Chomsky said if he lived in a swing state, he’d vote for Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton. By no means should this be viewed as an endorsement of Clinton. Chomsky has been a vocal Clinton critic, saying her presidency would resemble that of President Barack Obama, who Chomsky has condemned for using drone strikes to kill individuals the president deems worthy of execution. In an ideal world, Chomsky might vote for Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who Chomsky has called an "honest and committed New Dealer" who has “the best policies,” despite some criticisms. Regardless of who wins the Democratic nomination, Chomsky told Al Jazeera he'd cast his general election vote "against the Republican candidate” because there may be dire consequences to a GOP victory. “The likely candidates are, in my opinion, extremely dangerous, at least if they mean anything like what they are saying,” Chomsky said. “I think it makes good sense to keep them far away from levers of power.”

### Turns the Case—Ethics

#### DA turns the case—protecting future generations from environmental harm is a litmus test for any moral theory

**Bickham 81**

Stephen Bickham (Professor of Philosophy at Mansfield State College). “Future Generations and Contemporary Ethical Theory.” 1981. <http://profs-polisci.mcgill.ca/muniz/intergen/Bickham%20-%20Future%20generations%20and%20contemporary%20ethical%20theory.pdf>

There exists today in philosophy a question of our ethical obligations to future generations. Several different aspects of this question render it philosophically unusual. For one thing the substantive answer to the question is not in dispute. Were someone to suggest seriously that we have no ethical obligations to future generations and mean by this that we need take no care for what living conditions on the planet will be in a hundred years - that whether there would exist then, say, a lethal level of radioactivity in the atmosphere, it would be no concern of ours - we should regard that individual as lacking one of the most basic of human ethical sensibilities. Of course we have some serious responsibility for the future, though this does not commit us to the more particular position that we have ethical obligations to future generations. The question does not, thus, require an answer at the general level, nor am I prepared here to demarcate specifically the content of our responsibility for the future, though I shall treat of others' attempts to do so. I am interested rather in why this question should seem so mysterious at this time as to generate a dispute or issue within the philosophical community. Thus my focus will be interior to philosophy. I hope to show how the assumptions involved in raising this question in this way make it difficult for us to address the new realities with which the question is concerned. Why is this question a current one in philosophy? From a somewhat sociological perspective it is significant that John Rawls in A Theory of Justice, perhaps the most influential ethical treatise of the seventies, is the first person who seems to have dealt with the question in its current form.' I shall examine Rawls' position in detail later, but basically he treats justice among generations as involving each generation's passing on to the next a suitable accumulation of intellectual, economic, and educational "capital" so that the next can have the werewithal to continue or to establish just institutions, as well as support a reasonable standard of living.2 While the immense philosophical popularity of A Theory of Justice brought the current question to the attention of the philosophical community, most philosophers writing of the issue of ethical obligation to future generations since Rawls have seen the problem in an environmental rather than an economic context? It is clear that our relatively new capacity for possibly permanent devastation of the environment has created a new ethical situation which requires a reassessment of our responsibility to the future. Environmental pollution itself is nothing new. I am sitting a quarter of a mile from a river which has contained no life for about 80 years due to pollution from mine acid waste. In my county virtually every marketable tree was cut down between 1895 and 1915. But until now there just have not been enough people nor an advanced enough technology to threaten a large environment with permanent destruction or impairment. Trees grow back and mine acid waste pollution can be stopped, though it is expensive to do so. But we simply do not know how to render radioactive waste from power plants nonradioactive, or to replace the ozone layer in the atmosphere should this become depleted, or to develop an effective, economical replacement for iron. It is quite simple. We did not have the responsibility for the future that we do now before we had the capacity to destroy it. As I said earlier, our responsibility for the future in a broad sense is well recognized. What is not understood is how this responsibility is to be rationally grounded in an ethical theory. But it is becoming clear to ethicists that the question of our obligations to the future can be seen as a litmus test for an ethical theory. No theory can really be adequate to the contemporary situation which cannot found such obligations on its own principles. The problem is that each of the major, current ethical theories has difficulty doing this. I shall examine briefly the deontological theory and at more length the utilitarian and contractarian theories to illustrate why this is so

#### Independently, stopping extinction from warming is key to basic fairness and giving our lives meaning

**Cerruti 14**

Furio, Professor of Political Philosophy emeritus at the University of Florence and Adjunct Professor at the Scuola superiore Sant’Anna, Pisa. In the last fifteen years, Cerutti has been aVisiting Professor at Harvard, the Universit´e de Paris 8, the Humboldt Universit ¨at zu Berlin, the London School of Economics and Political Science,(China Foreign Affairs University), Beijing, and Stanford University in Florence. Beyond the publications quoted in this article, Cerutti has written widely on the political identity of the Europeans and the legitimacy of the European Union (last publication: Debating Political Identity and Legitimacy in the European Union, ed. with S. Lucarelli and V. Schmidt, Routledge: London 2011), “Humankind’s First Fundamental Right: Survival,” Constellations, 2014

I have explained elsewhere9 why survival rather than justice is the leading category of a philosophy of global threats. The now thriving literature on justice and climate change misses the point that before we look for ways to establish justice between generations, we have to motivate our interest in their existence and wellbeing, or rather in the existence and wellbeing of humankind.10 While survival of humankind is what best defines our problematic situation, when it comes to the normative aspect I believe that we should assume responsibility for future generations rather than do justice to them; talking responsibility I move from its most elementary manifestation, the responsibility parents take on for their children. Justice as fairness comes in when we have to fight back “generational nepotism:” it is wrong for any generation to spoil the environment without regard to the consequences in the future, far that it may be, that is not just out of respect for those that may harm our children and children’s children. Out of **elementary fairness**, as expressed in the Golden Rule, we cannot deny parents of the, say, twenty-fifth century the chance to bear and educate their children in decent conditions. Now, survival is a Hobbesian category, as such it sounds like an anathema to critical thinking, just as most categories stemming from the tradition of political realism do. Since under global threats present and future humankind is really endangered in its survival, it is however hard to see the rationale of denying the fact because the name comes from the enemy’s vocabulary. More importantly, there is an essential difference: Hobbes’ survival regards the individual and is therefore self-centered and adversarial (in common parlance, mors tua vita mea), while humankind’s survival as a moral and political goal is by its own definition an universalistic feature. More on this later. A much talked-about issue in this context is the socalled identity problem, which I am however inclined to dismiss. If it means the doubtfulness of any engagement in favor of future generations because we do not know if they will exist (we could decide to stop procreating), the problem is surrounded by an air of futility: there is no imaginable decision process that could effectively lead to a total procreation stop. On the other hand, if only a few humans were alive in the far future, this would be enough of a reason for our engagement. Of course future humanity could never be born because meanwhile the planet may have been burnt out by an asteroid (natural precariousness of human life) or an all-out nuclear war ([hu]man-made precariousness). Neither type of precariousness can however be a reason not to endorse the interest of future generations in survival, **because reducing that precariousness is exactly the engagement’s telos**. The other aspect of the identity problem — the non-identity of posterity’s values and preferences with our own, or their indeterminacy — is not relevant to our case, because the goal for whose attainment we are called to save or sacrifice something for their survival has to do with their **sheer survival** (in an indispensably civilized framework, as explained above) rather than with our own and the posterity’s moral configuration; in other words, there is no paternalistic attitude in it. In a fairly different meaning, closer to social rather than moral (analytical) theory, identity comes up in another sense. Assuming responsibility for (or, for that matter, being fair to) future generations is not just an altruistic attitude. Not in the sense that we can do as well do so by acting on egoistic grounds: were this the main reason to take action, we were justified to limit our effort to the less costly adaptation policies instead of funding the restructuring of the economy necessary for mitigation, the only way-out from global warming for generations of the far future. To be true, addressing the limitation of global **warming** or the neutralization of nuclear weapons requires wide-ranging undertakings that can be justified only on grounds of a moral attitude towards future generations rather than of our enlightened self-interest. But doing what we can for the survival of humankind can give ourselves **reassurance that our individual life (also seen in the context of our generation’s) is meaningful** beyond the limits of our own existence on earth, because doing so helps us shed our isolation as single individuals or single generation and become partners in a wider transgenerational covenant of solidarity.

## 2NR

### Overview

#### [UQ explanation]

#### A handgun ban will face massive public opposition and be a huge win for Republicans—that’s Scher—gun control is set to be a major election issue, and Dems have historically lost when that’s happened—that’s Tani

A GOP win causes extinction from climate change—the GOP candidates are either climate deniers or have no real strategy to curb warming—this guarantees catastrophic environmental damage and the end of humanity—that’s Ferner

#### Disad turns the case because…

### UQ—Obama Key

#### Clinton’s tied to Obama—if Obama’s approval ratings decline, Hillary will lose

**Sabato et al 15**

Larry Sabato (founder and director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. He is also the University Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia, and has had visiting appointments at Oxford University and Cambridge University in Great Britain. A Rhodes Scholar, he received his doctorate from Oxford, and he is the author or editor of two dozen books on American politics), Kyle Kondik (Before joining the Center for Politics in 2011, Kyle served as director of policy and research for former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray and as a reporter, editorial page editor, and political columnist at newspapers in Northeast Ohio. He is a 2006 graduate of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University), and Geoffrey Skelley (Geoffrey received an M.A. in Political Science (with a focus on the European Union) from James Madison University in 2011, and is a graduate of the University of Virginia, receiving a B.A. in History in 2009). “10 Factors That Will Determine The Next President.” Sabato’s Crystal Ball, University of Virginia Center for Politics. December 17th, 2015. http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/ten-factors-that-will-determine-the-next-president/

President Obama is not on the ballot, but he looms over the race. His national standing has remained very consistent — some would say stagnant — throughout much of his presidency. Throughout 2015, Obama’s approval has generally been around 45%, with a little bit of variation. It seems reasonable to expect that he will be around the same point next year, unless further domestic terrorism or other developments send his ratings tumbling. According to Gallup, Obama has averaged a middling 47% approval throughout his presidency, and as we found earlier this year, his approval has been the steadiest in modern history. Postwar history suggests that when a president has weak approval, his party pays a price in the next election. Harry Truman (1952), Lyndon Johnson (1968), Gerald Ford (1976), Jimmy Carter (1980), George H.W. Bush (1992), and George W. Bush (2008) all had mediocre-to-poor approval ratings, and the opposing party won all of those elections (defeating incumbents Ford, Carter, and H.W. Bush, and winning open-seat races in the others). Meanwhile, the strong approval ratings of Dwight Eisenhower (1960) and Bill Clinton (2000) couldn’t save their would-be successors, Vice Presidents Richard Nixon and Al Gore. Both lost excruciatingly close elections. Some of these approval ratings are from months before the election and don’t necessarily reflect where the incumbent’s approval was on Election Day — Truman, for example, was at 40% in late June 1948, but his approval was likely higher by November, when he won an upset victory. There’s one other factor to consider, though. It’s possible that in a partisan age, job approval doesn’t mean what it once did. Just think back to the 2014 midterm. Then-Gov. Pat Quinn (D-IL) was at about 30% approval, but he only lost by four percentage points. Gov. Sam Brownback (R) and Sen. Pat Roberts (R) of Kansas had approval ratings in the mid-30s, but both won reelection. Granted, both of those states have strong partisan tilts (Illinois is Democratic, Kansas is Republican), and these were state-level races in a midterm year, but it’s possible that low approvals aren’t as much of a drag as they might once have been. Perhaps Obama’s approval will drop below the mid-40s, but Clinton could win if the Republicans produce a poor nominee. The other thing is that, with the history of presidential approval ratings cited above, we do not have a huge sample size. There isn’t a hard-and-fast rule here, but there is a reason that Clinton, so far, is generally staying close to the president. Presenting a united Democratic front, and seeing Obama have a successful final year in office, can only be good for her chances. Plus, if Obama tanks, so probably do Clinton’s chances.

### UQ—Prediction Markets

**Prediction markets prove—Dems win now in 2016, but there’s still plenty of time for that to change**

**Cox 4-7**

Jeff Cox (CNBC staff writer). “Wall St is pretty certain Hillary Clinton will be president.” CNBC. April 7th, 2016. http://www.cnbc.com/2016/04/06/wall-st-is-pretty-certain-who-will-be-president.html

In the polling places and on the airwaves, there remains a high level of uncertainty about who will be the next U.S. president. Not so on Wall Street and the markets. **Recent indications** from deep-pocketed institutional investors as well as those who frequent prediction markets say Hillary **Clinton will win**. And it's not close. More than 70 percent of respondents to a recent Citigroup poll of institutional clients viewed the former secretary of state, first lady and New York senator as the likely 45th president. Just over 10 percent give Donald Trump the nod, while fellow Republican John Kasich is a few points behind. Democrat Bernie Sanders and Republican Ted Cruz barely register. (The poll was taken before Sanders and Cruz scored big primary wins Tuesday in Wisconsin.) The online predictions markets, where traders can place their bets on politics and a host of other events, tell a similar story. On PredictIt, Clinton traded early Wednesday at a price of 59 cents a share, which equates to the probability participants give her to be the ultimate winner. Trump is at 17 cents, Sanders at 16 cents and Cruz at 15 cents. While **there's still plenty of time before the November election**, markets are getting acclimated to the idea of a Clinton victory. Wall Street-related firms are Clinton's biggest contributor group, giving her just over $21 million of the total $159 million she has raised during her campaign, according to OpenSecrets. "An awful lot of investors view her as the devil they know as opposed to the devil they don't know," said Greg Valliere, chief global strategist at Horizon Investments and widely recognized as one of the leading experts on how what happens in Washington affects Wall Street. "It's a true cliche: The market doesn't like uncertainty."

#### Here’s another prediction market that goes neg, and these markets are credible

**McLendon 2-26**

Kim McLendon (contributor). “Presidential Debates and Predicting the Next President: Pundits, Polls, Prediction Market, and Betting Odds.” Inquisitr. February 26th, 2016. <http://www.inquisitr.com/2829997/presidential-debates-and-predicting-the-next-president-pundits-polls-prediction-market-and-betting-odds/>

Watching presidential debates is just a small part of predicting the next president, according to the Political Prediction Market, as administered by Pivit. KWCH Channel 12 out of Kansas explains how Pivit uses a combination of polls, internet user input, and other elements to arrive at their predictions. Greg DePetris of Pivot explains the value of this sort of data. “The markets provide continuous, real-time feedback, and that data has contrasted clearly with the snapshot quality of polls. Those following these markets closely see trends developing much sooner than polls.” Pivit gives Trump 70 percent odds of winning the Republican nomination, while Rubio gets 29 percent odds. Cruz was given only 2 percent. They place Hillary as the Democratic Nominee at 88 percent odds. Then Pivot predicts the Democratic Nominee to win at 62 percent odds.

#### Prediction markets are extremely accurate at elections forecasting

**Solman et al 2-18**

\*\*Quotes David Rothschild (economist for Microsoft Research) Natalie Jackson (Senior Polling Editor for the Huffington Pot) and John Phillips (CEO of Aristotle, a company that provides technology to political campaigns).

Paul Solman (economics correspondent, PBS Newshour). “Something better than polls for political predictions? You bet!” PBS Newshour, transcript presented by Rory O’Connor. February 18th, 2016. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/something-better-than-polls-for-political-predictions-you-bet/

PAUL SOLMAN: But when it comes to presidential prognostication, what source is your best bet? A poll? A pundit? A real-time trending Google search? Turns out it’s none of the above. DAVID ROTHSCHILD, Economist, Microsoft Research: I think that the markets have really been ahead of the polling and ahead of the pundits. PAUL SOLMAN: Because, says David Rothschild, who studies them, political prediction markets incorporate all available information. DAVID ROTHSCHILD: This is where markets have a huge advantage over the smartest people just dealing with polling or historical data. We looked at the 2012 elections. We looked at all the primaries. We looked at all the senatorial, gubernatorial, presidential elections. And you see something that is more accurate than any collection of pundits or statistical polling averages, and extremely well-calibrated. NATALIE JACKSON, Senior Polling Editor, The Huffington Post: Polls show what people are thinking now, whereas the prediction markets are what people think will happen in the future. PAUL SOLMAN: Moreover, says Natalie Jackson, senior polling editor for The Huffington Post, technology has made polling more dicey. NATALIE JACKSON: We’re seeing a huge drop-off in landline telephones, which was pollsters’ bread and butter for a long time. PAUL SOLMAN: John Phillips heads a nonpartisan political technology company called Aristotle. His firm built and operates PredictIt, one of just two places Americans can legally bet on or, Phillips would prefer I say, invest in political predictions, though no more than $850. Still, as at the race track or stock market, you’re putting your money where your mouth is. JOHN PHILLIPS, CEO, Aristotle: And that’s the beauty of putting just a little bit of money on it. It all of a sudden becomes a matter of pride, but it also becomes a matter of focus. You want to see how your investment’s doing. PAUL SOLMAN: Phillips gave me a tutorial on how PredictIt works. I’m a guy who loves to play long shots. My father worked at the racetrack for many years when I was a kid. So, I would go with John Kasich at 2 cents. All he has to do is go up to 4 cents, and I have doubled my money, right? JOHN PHILLIPS: Well, yes, if he goes up to 4 cents or… PAUL SOLMAN: So, what the heck? I bought 25 shares. JOHN PHILLIPS: Here you got — here’s your 50 cents up here. You are now the proud owner. PAUL SOLMAN: Of John Kasich at 2 cents to win the Nevada primary, that is. In addition to the thrill of victory, the agony of defeat, and the chance to make money, PredictIt provides a passel of information about the race. JOHN PHILLIPS: Now, there are 84 comments on this particular market right now. PAUL SOLMAN: Oh, look, Clinton 36 cents. This was the Democratic primary market in Colorado. So, the market has suddenly collapsed. So I think I will go with that. And now, if I want to buy Bernie Sanders in another market, to level the playing field, and so Oklahoma, Sanders is down to 22 cents in Oklahoma, so I’m going to buy Sanders. Offer matched. Close. I’m in. So, I’m rooting for Bernie Sanders in Oklahoma, Hillary Clinton in Colorado, and John Kasich in Nevada. Other larger online political markets, like Ireland’s Paddy Power and Britain’s Betfair, echo the odds on PredictIt and take as much as you want to bet. But they’re illegal for U.S. citizens to play. PredictIt got government approval by limiting the amount to $850 per market and casting itself as both an investment marketplace and academic research tool, since it began as a project at New Zealand’s Victoria University. JOHN PHILLIPS: We provide the technology. Once the data is collected, it’s anonymized, and then there are research agreements with almost two dozen U.S. universities and Oxford University. PAUL SOLMAN: But you’re still betting real money. You keep saying investing, but it is betting, isn’t it? JOHN PHILLIPS: I see it as a stock market. A funny thing happens when people try to figure out what is going to happen tomorrow or a week down the road. And if I can put a little bit of money in the outcome that I’m expecting, I think that’s a stock market. PAUL SOLMAN: Can we compromise on agreeing that it’s gambling? JOHN PHILLIPS: I think you can call it anything you want. PAUL SOLMAN: But whatever you call it, says researcher Rothschild: DAVID ROTHSCHILD: The people who are playing the market are taking the pulse of the general population, and they have done so accurately for long enough that we can trust that they’re understanding how things are impacting very quickly. PAUL SOLMAN: But PredictIt chief John Phillips says his market provides something more: a prod to democratic involvement. JOHN PHILLIPS: These traders not only pay more attention to politics, but they also are more likely to vote. Even though it’s only a $1 winner take-all-contract with an $850 limit, it still starts to cause you to think about things differently, and that’s the magic here. It may be that it is an engagement tool for the 20-year-olds. PAUL SOLMAN: Researcher Rothschild agrees. DAVID ROTHSCHILD: People will start paying attention in a way that they never did before, and so they will make an effort to learn about politics, to understand politics, to engage in politics, in a way that is very, very beneficial to our society.

#### Prediction markets are historically accurate

**Economist 3-1**

The Economist. “How useful is Google search data when predicting primary elections?” March 1st, 2016. http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/03/election-forecasting

The internet provides a handy aggregator of all available information about future events. Prediction markets are betting exchanges in which punters place wagers on which candidates are likely to win an election. Anyone in possession of valuable knowledge about a campaign can monetise it by betting on the outcome they believe most likely. That in turn increases the price of that wager for anyone else who wants to place it. Historically, prediction-market prices have hewed very closely to the probability, expressed from 0% to 100%, that a given event will occur. As a result, the true measure of whether Google searches are valuable in forecasting primary votes is whether a blend of Google data and prediction-market prices yields more accurate results than prediction markets alone do.

### AT Link Turns

#### The aff is a huge win for the GOP, and the NRA has a lot of political influence

**Collinson 15**

Stephen Collinson (staff writer). “Obama’s change crusade hits reality on guns.” CNN. October 5th, 2015. http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/02/politics/obama-gun-control-oregon-shooting/

Washington (CNN) Nowhere is the gulf between Barack Obama's once intoxicating calls for change and entrenched political reality wider than on gun control. After yet another gun massacre followed his inability to enact even modest gun control during his administration, the graying president spent Thursday and Friday railing against gridlocked politics and the power of the gun lobby. And as he beseeched the American people to act, it seemed that even the man who once preached "we are the change we seek" had begun to lose faith in the capacity of politics to bend the curve towards reform. "This is not something I can do by myself," Obama said in an emotional White House appearance Thursday evening after nine people died in a shooting at a community college in Oregon. "It will require that the American people, individually, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican or an Independent, when you decide to vote for somebody, are making a determination as to whether this cause of continuing death for innocent people should be a relevant factor in your decision," Obama said. His remarks Thursday and again during a news conference Friday when he vowed to keep talking about the issue were not just a reflection of frustration, but also of personal failure. Since his push to enact a ban on assault weapons and wider background checks for gun owners collapsed on Capitol Hill in 2013, gun control has slipped down the list of White House priorities, below a legacy-building Iran deal, an opening with Cuba and reform of the immigration system. Obama, by his own admission, has now become little more than a grim scorekeeper after mass gun massacres -- a role that on Thursday night he bitterly complained has become routine. He seems destined to turn off the lights at the White House in 16 months without substantial change on gun legislation. In office, the guns issue has been much more nettlesome than it appeared during the 2008 presidential campaign, when Obama said it should be possible to get illegal guns off the streets and prevent them from falling into the hands of the mentally ill. "What we have to do is get beyond the politics of this issue and figure out what, in fact, is working," Obama said at a presidential primary debate in Philadelphia. Seven years on, Obama is still struggling to get past those politics -- but some gun-rights advocates believe he has tried his best. "The general idea that the president hasn't done enough -- I just don't see that at all -- he was physically sick yesterday," said Ladd Everitt, communications director for the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. "He can't run Congress, he can't cast congressional votes." Though the White House push to overhaul gun legislation failed in 2013, Obama did order 23 executive actions designed to reduce violence with firearms, though he admitted congressional action would be much more meaningful. The White House says it has made progress on all the measures, including those requiring federal agencies to share information on the background check system, to trace guns recovered in criminal investigations and to review standards for gun locks and safes. But those measures are small ball in a nation swamped by hundreds of millions of guns and where the politics of the issue are shaped by **the political muscle of the National Rifle Association**. The White House has **failed to find traction** on a middle ground that would allow meaningful reform to thrive while protecting the constitutional right to bear arms -- a compromise that would enjoy broad public support and still represent a practical way of regulating the firearms industry. And Obama seems to know it, allowing a note of self recrimination to creep into his voice on Thursday night. "This is a political choice that we make to allow this to happen every few months in America. We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction." In a sense, Obama initially made his own political choice not to pursue gun reform -- at the moment when his political influence was at its apex, when Democrats controlled both the House and the Senate after he took office in 2009. With a financial crisis raging and with other priorities, including health care reform, sucking up his political capital, there was no room for firearms reform. The consequence of that choice became clear in 2013, when even a watered-down bill on background checks fell victim to a Senate filibuster by four votes -- even with shock still fresh from the gunning down of 6-year-old schoolkids in their classes in Newtown, Connecticut. Eighty-five to 90% of Americans tell pollsters they favor tightening background checks to stop criminals or mentally ill people from getting weapons. Despite those numbers, **there is little political momentum** for change. The chances of meaningful gun control reform are slim to none until the political mix changes in Washington -- and that could take years, since Republicans who **rely on a base of voters resistant to such measures** control the House of Representatives and the Senate. Republican presidential candidates reacted to Thursday's shooting by uniformly resisting new gun control measures. Sen. Marco Rubio, for instance, said: "There is just no evidence that these gun laws would prevent these shootings." Still, some gun-control advocates say Obama could do more than talk. "We believe that on a few very specific fronts they can do more to crack down on bad-apple gun dealers, the very small percentage of gun dealers who sell almost every crime gun in the U.S.," said Dan Gross, president of the Brady campaign. "The ATF has the power to crack down on them and pull their licenses if they are responsible for business practices that wind up causing gun crime and gun violence." The 2016 candidates stances on gun control 9 photos: The 2016 candidates stances on gun control The White House could also lead a national conversation on the public health and safety risks associated with gun ownership, said Gross. After all, the administration does have a campaign on healthy eating, so why not guns? "In our opinion, they haven't done all that they can do to really lead that conversation that could result in safer homes and saving a lot of lives," Gross said. Looking outside Washington could also work. Increasingly, gun-reform advocates are turning away from the impasse at the federal level to the states -- eight of which have now introduced expanded criminal background checks on private gun sales. Nevada has scheduled a ballot initiative in November 2016 which would require background checks and close loopholes on online sales and at gun shows. Maine is also expected to follow suit. Opinion: Right to laws that keep you safe from gun violence Such developments hint at the reality that political change is often the work of generations rather than years -- and can span a number of presidencies. For now, **polling shows little consensus** on the way forward. In a Pew Research poll in July, 71% of Republicans said protecting the constitutional right to bear arms was more important than gun control. Among Democrats, the figures were almost exactly reversed. While such data explain Republican caution, it may offer an opportunity for Democrats, and one -- Hillary Clinton -- has noticed. "I think that what we need is a national movement," Clinton said Thursday. "We're going to go at this from the top down, namely go back to the Congress, go back to try and put together a sensible, bipartisan position that was supported before in the Senate to get to universal background checks. "But we're also going to go from the bottom up. I'm going to make this a voting issue, because what the NRA does in their single-minded, absolutist theology about the Second Amendment being sacrosanct." Opinion: Lawmakers failing us on gun violence Gun-control advocates are also taking heart from other sweeping political transformations -- including the stunning shift of opinion on same-sex marriage -- which started in the states and left federal politicians racing to keep up. "I think, I very much believe now, that on the gun issue we are going to have our Confederate flag or our gay-marriage moment, when there is a cultural break," Everitt said. But for all the optimism, the NRA has a 30-year head start in perfecting how to frame the gun argument -- in which every modest gun-regulation effort is spun as an attempt by the federal government to snatch away the guns of law-abiding Americans. "The politics has to change," Obama said, still fuming, in the aftermath of the Oregon shooting when he met reporters on Friday afternoon. "People who are troubled by this have to be as intense and as organized and as adamant about this issue as folks on the other side."

### Ext: GOP Bad--Warming

**GOP victory kills any possible progress on warming—the next president is make it or break it**

**Neuhauser, 15** - energy, environment and STEM reporter for U.S. News & World Report. (Alan, “The Climate Change Election”, August 14, 2015, US News, http://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2015/08/14/the-2016-election-is-critical-for-stopping-climate-change)

For as long as Americans have voted and pundits have bloviated, each presidential election cycle has seemed The Most Important in All History. Next year, though, may truly – actually, seriously – be different, if climate scientists are right. The next candidate Americans send to the Oval Office, experts say, **may also be the very last who can avert catastrophe from climate change.** "It is urgent and the timeframe is critical and it has to be right now," says Vicki Arroyo, executive director of the Georgetown Climate Center at Georgetown Law. "We can't lose another four years, much less eight years." This is not an overnight ice age or a rise of the apes. But global warming is already here, parching the American West, flooding coastal cities, strengthening storms, erasing species and inflaming armed conflict, with a rise of just 0.85 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. And it's going to get worse, experts say. Last year, a U.N. panel of scientists predicted the world had until 2050 to slash emissions by as much as 70 percent to keep temperatures from rising another 1.15 degrees by the end of the century. That's the threshold of an unstoppable cycle of Arctic and Antarctic melting, the release of heat-trapping gases that had been caught in the ice, more warming, more melting, more warming, more melting – until the glaciers and ice caps disappear. But some researchers – including the man who first presented the facts on climate change to Congress in 1988 – say that that tipping point may come even sooner, perhaps as early as 2036: Humans, in short, are having an even greater impact than expected. "Sea level projections and upcoming United Nations meetings in Paris are far too sluggish compared with the magnitude and speed of sea level changes," the scientist, Columbia professor James Hansen, wrote Wednesday in a Q&A on the web forum Reddit, discussing a study he published in July. The needed changes are monumental: Halting climate change and heading off its worst consequences is going to require a wholesale switch from fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas to renewables like wind and solar – potentially upending utilities, energy producers and construction contractors, the sort of change "of the magnitude of the invention of the steam engine or the electrification of society," says Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a nonpartisan energy research group. "How quickly can we transform one of the most complex industrial systems – our energy system – across the globe in order to move toward low carbon?" he asks . "There is absolutely no doubt we have to act now." This presents an election – and a choice – with no historical analogues. "This will be a make-or-break presidency as far as our ability to avert a climate change catastrophe," says Michael Mann, meteorology professor and director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State University, whose "hockey-stick" shaped graph warned of sharply rising emissions and temperatures. Pick any issue throughout history, he and others argue, none has shared the three qualities that make climate change stand apart: **its threat to the entire planet, the short window to respond, and how sharply it has divided the two parties' candidates.** "Republicans and Democrats have argued over issues for years, but I can't think of an example where one party didn't even say that the issue exists," says Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas Tech University who has advised Evangelical and conservative climate action groups, and who has urged policymakers to address warming. ​​ Four of the five Democratic candidates has pledged or supported Obama administration efforts to cut the heat-trapping emissions that cause climate change: Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Martin O'Malley and Lincoln Chafee. Former Sen. Jim Webb has said he'd expand the use of fossil fuels and once voted to block the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating certain greenhouse gas emissions. Among the Republicans, eight of the 17 candidates have hedged: Jeb Bush, Carly Fiorina, Lindsey Graham, Jim Gilmore, Bobby Jindal, John Kasich, George Pataki and Rand Paul have acknowledged that humans do contribute to global warming, but have questioned or stopped short of saying how much – a position at odds with the findings of a vast majority of scientists. "The climate is changing; I don't think anybody can argue it's not. Human activity has contributed to it," Bush said in an email interview with Bloomberg BNA in July – a statement that notably did not mention how much humans were at fault. During a campaign stop in New Hampshire in June, he had previously told listeners, "The climate is changing, whether men are doing it or not," one month after calling it "arrogant" to say climate science is settled. The rest of the GOP field – including three senators who rejected a January amendment tying human activity to climate change – has dismissed the issue outright. Paul also voted against the amendment. "As a scientist it's very frustrating to hear politicians basically saying, 'This isn't true,' or, 'They're just making it up to get government money,'" Hayhoe says. "A thermometer is not Democrat or Republican. What observations are telling us is not political – it is what it is." And there are conservative solutions for warming. Some party members, in fact, see it as an inherently Republican issue: Carbon emissions, for example, distort the free market, forcing others to pay the higher and indirect costs of climate change (storm recovery, disaster relief) plus the health costs associated with air pollution. ​​ ​​​"We allow the coal industry to socialize its costs, and we conservatives don't like allowing people to socialize anything," says former South Carolina Rep. Bob Inglis, who now explores free-market solutions to climate change as head of the Energy and Enterprise Institute at George Mason University. A revenue-neutral carbon tax, one that does not support other programs and instead goes back to households, could fix that distortion, he and others argue. "The question is not, 'Is there going to be a tax on carbon?' It's, 'Do you want a tax that you have a voice in and control, or do you want to keep writing checks after disasters that you have no control over?'" says retired Rear Admiral David Titley, who has advised some of the GOP presidential candidates and directs the Center for Solutions to Weather and Climate Risk at Penn State University. "That $60 billion relief bill for Hurricane Sandy that passed very quickly through a Republican-led House, did you get a vote on that tax? Because that's a tax." Yet Inglis, himself is a living example of what can happen to conservatives who call for climate action. The recipient of the JFK Profile in Courage Award in April, he was unseated in the Republican primary in 2010 after shifting his position on global warming. "Republicans say, 'Look at what happened to him when he said it was real. Do you want that to happen to you?'" Hayhoe describes. Oil, gas and coal companies, along with billionaire Libertarian industrialists David and Charles Koch, rank among the biggest campaign donors, and often seem as allergic to new taxes as a bubble boy to fresh pollen. But popular sentiment among voters appears to be changing: Most Republican voters say they support climate action, and last week, Shell did not renew its membership in the Koch-backed American Legislative Exchange Council because of the group's opposition to climate action. Even the climate statements by the eight Republicans who have hedged on warming, vague as they were, may signify a kind of progress – especially during the primaries, when candidates play to their parties' more extreme bases. "In the Great Recession in 2010, it was this very atheistic position with regard to climate change: 'We don't believe,'" Inglis says. "Then, in the 2014 cycle, 'I'm not a scientist,' that was an agnostic position. These are data points on a trend line toward a tipping point." Republicans can exploit a distinct advantage on climate action, too, he adds: Voters tend to support the presidents who buck party stereotypes. "Nixon goes to China, Bill Clinton signs welfare reform – the country will trust a conservative to touch climate," Inglis argues. But climate scientists, environmental advocates and Democrats remain deeply skeptical. The most recent Republican president, for one, backpedaled on his 2000 campaign pledge to rein-in carbon emissions. **Campaign donations remain hugely influential, and as Republican candidates lambaste the environmental agenda of the Obama administration, stopping climate change will actually require they expand upon Obama initiatives**: resist industry pressure to slow the roll-out of tighter fuel standards for cars, push states to reduce emissions from their power sectors and uphold and ratchet-up international commitments to slow carbon emissions. There's also the Supreme Court: with four Supreme Court justices now over the age of 70, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg pushing 80, the next president will likely have the chance to nominate new jurists to the court – a court that will almost certainly decide challenges to various environmental actions aimed at slowing global warming. "If we are going to avoid catastrophic, irreversible climate change impacts, we have to be ramping down our carbon emissions dramatically in the years ahead. The current administration has begun that process, but our next president must not only continue but build on that progress," Mann says. It is on the global stage where perhaps the spotlight – and climate scientists' hopes and expectations – will shine brightest. In December, negotiators from nearly 200 nations will meet in Paris to hammer-out an international climate accord. It is expected to include commitments from China and India, heavy polluters spurred to rein-in their emissions and invest in clean energy by America's own commitment to slash carbon emissions from its power sector. "The rest of the world is going to expect the U.S. to live up to its commitment [made at the Paris meeting], no matter who is in the White House," says Henrik Selin, professor of international relations at the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University. "If you have a president who comes in and starts rolling back the Obama initiatives, you're going to have international leaders being very unhappy about this – and they are not just countries, they are trading partners. This is not just a domestic issue, it's also very much a foreign policy issue." And so far, he and others argue, **none of the Republican candidates have offered a clear vision on climate, let alone any plan to slow warming**. "If we want to get to that low-carbon future, we have to agree that's where we're going to go, and then we can fight over the speed at which we're going to get there," Kortenhorst, of the Rocky Mountain Institute, says. As David Sandalow, who held senior posts in the State Department and Energy Department under Obama and is an inaugural fellow at the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy, describes: "There's a very big difference between electing a candidate who's committed to seriously addressing this problem and one who isn't. The implications of failing to address the problem in the next four years could be very serious."

#### Electing a GOP president spurs worldwide abandonment of the Paris deal and guarantees catastrophic warming

**Graves 1-5**

Lucia Graves (staff writer). “The Whole World Has a Stake in the Outcome of Our Presidential Election.” Pacific Standard. January 5th, 2016. <http://www.psmag.com/politics-and-law/2016-presidential-election-does-the-world-have-a-future>

This Christmas, summer came early in the North Pole. A freak storm pushed temperatures 50 degrees Fahrenheit above normal and past the melting point; in the eastern United States, temperatures climbed to the high 60s in places as far north as Boston, Massachusetts, and Burlington, Vermont. There wasn't enough snowfall on the entire east coast for James Inhofe to make a snowball. Last year, 2015, was easily the hottest year on the books, but you would never know it to hear our presidential candidates talk on the trail. Just days after world leaders forged the Paris climate agreement, the planet's best hope for curbing the catastrophic effects of global warming, Republican presidential candidates assembled for a debate. And nobody, not the nine candidates on the main stage or the three moderators before them, mentioned the Paris Agreement as anything more than a passing jab. "And when I see they have a climate conference over in Paris, they should have been talking about destroying ISIS," Ohio Governor John Kasich said. Donald Trump merely scoffed at how President Obama thinks climate change is even a priority. That was it, in the wake of the historic moment: nada, zip, zilch, zero actual conversation. Just a one-touch dismissal from a guy most people don't know is even running, and a jibe in the deal's general direction from The Donald. It wasn't an oversight—it's standard practice on climate for Republicans. The party's internally incoherent consensus on the matter seems to be that the climate agreement is somewhere between "reckless," "ridiculous," and a "threat" to our sovereignty—and anyway, climate change is not really happening. But how, exactly, would the candidates respond to the landmark deal once in office? Specifically, would they submit an even stronger climate plan by 2020, as the U.S. is now required to do under the international accord? Or would they tear up the document entirely? Where candidates come down on this matter will have tremendous consequences, not just for environmentalists or even for Americans, but for the world. While Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have done a remarkable job of skirting Republican opposition in Congress—laying the groundwork through intercountry alliances in recent years—experts say a GOP president could legally unravel the deal. Whether it's by rolling back Obama's Clean Power Plan—a lynchpin of the U.S. commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions—or by pulling out of the deal directly, a Republican president could single-handedly undo the past decade of progress on climate and propel the world far beyond the warming cap of two degrees Celsius needed to stave off the worst consequences of climate change. The U.S., as the world’s second-largest emitter currently and the biggest emitter cumulatively, has an outsized duty in preserving the planet’s future. Obama seems to be betting that a GOP president wouldn't go through with breaking the global contract; as he told reporters in Paris: “Your credibility and America’s ability to influence events depends on taking seriously what other countries care about.” Now that there's global consensus behind taking action, Obama added, the next president "is going to need to think this is really important." So far, however, that looks like wishful thinking, particularly where Republican frontrunners are concerned. Ted Cruz has already said he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris accord, telling reporters in a high school classroom in Knoxville, Tennessee: "Barack Obama seems to think the SUV parked in your driveway is a bigger threat to national security than radical Islamic terrorists who want to kill us. That’s just nutty. These are ideologues, they don’t focus on the facts, they won’t address the facts, and what they’re interested [in] instead is more and more government power." Trump, while he hasn't directly addressed the accord, has argued in the past that climate change is a hoax created by the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive. Meanwhile Rand Paul thinks granting power to the United Nations would threaten U.S. sovereignty, resulting in "a bunch of two-bit dictators telling America what to do," as he put it recently. Marco Rubio insists the Paris climate deal is an "unfunny joke" that's "hurting the American dream." “Here’s the most outrageous part,” Rubio told Fox News recently. “This is a deal that’s going to require the American taxpayer to send billions of dollars to developing countries. Well, China considers itself a developing country. Does that mean the American taxpayer is going to send billions to China to help them comply with the arrangement here?” Short answer: no. Contrary to Rubio's impressions, China played a leadership role in the Paris talks and was on the giving side of the equation, offering up to $3.1 billion to help actual developing countries. In fact, the only Republican candidate supporting clear actions on climate change, Lindsey Graham, dropped out in late December after failing for months to break the one percent mark in the polls. He never even made it onstage for anything but an undercard debate. The only other Republican contender to express (tepid) support for the deal, George Pataki, dropped out a week later. This, apparently, is what happens when you take a realistic, even semi-honest approach to climate change in the Republican primary: You’re drummed out. There remains no candidate on the Republican side who will commit to upholding the deal, and the majority of candidates have said nothing about the agreement at all. By contrast, all three candidates on the Democratic side have said they'd not just honor the Paris Agreement, but advance it; before the gavel even went down in Paris, Bernie Sanders was lamenting that the deal doesn't go far enough. But denial won't play well in the general election. A recent Pew Research Center survey found 69 percent of Americans favor a multilateral commitment to limit the burning of greenhouse gas emissions; and that such statistics are sharply divided by political affiliation won't work in Republicans’ favor come November. The leading Democratic contender, Hillary Clinton—well aware of her party's edge here—has been increasingly vocal on climate, as when she came out against the Keystone XL pipeline even before president Obama nixed the project ahead of Paris. She's also voiced her support for all the president’s executive actions on climate. Still, many environmental advocates still favor Sanders, who, as movement leader Bill McKibben noted in an aside at Paris climate talks, was against Keystone as early as 2011, when the pipeline first came on the national stage. Given how things looked (say) 18 months ago, environmentalists can perhaps take comfort in watching Democratic candidates argue in prime-time over who hated Keystone first, and most. The world will be presented with two stark choices come the general election. But the White House, for its part, expresses hope that the accord can be upheld regardless. "I think it's going to be incredibly difficult to move back from this position," a senior administration official told reporters post-Paris. "Momentum begets momentum." "We don't want to be naive to the domestic policies here," he added, "but I think with every passing month and with every passing milestone, [the ideals of the Paris Agreement] will get more and more baked in." Of course it's possible that Republicans are just pandering and that, if elected to office, a Republican president might not seek to destroy the deal. Obama has gestured to this possibility, arguing: "Even if somebody from a different party succeeded me, one of the things you find is when you're in this job, you think about it differently than if you're just running for the job." Maybe he's right. But is it worth betting the world? For years the U.S. has had the dubious distinction of being the only country anywhere with a major party that denies the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real, man-made, and accelerating. It was always a denial with far-reaching effects, given the U.S.'s hefty emissions, currently the second largest after China's, but now that pernicious reach is extended farther still. If America elects a Republican in 2016, he (it would almost certainly be a “he”) could undermine the diplomatic efforts of almost 200 countries, offering our global partners a tempting excuse to abandon their climate commitments—and to distrust the U.S. for years to come. Given America’s long history of hypocrisy in climate negotiations and repeated broken promises to world partners, such a reversal could be devastating. In Paris, for the first time ever, the U.S. played the role of a climate leader, hero even, in these talks, a hard-won victory that's been years in the making. That Obama has invested so much in this deal for so long, that he's made it a centerpiece of his administration—and, many expect, the overarching mission of his final year in office—underscores just how difficult it is to achieve the kind of victory we saw in Paris, and just how much these global climate talks depend on the power of the U.S. president. If Obama could make this, the next guy could break it. It might not be easy to destroy the Paris Agreement, but it would be a whole lot easier than what the world pulled off at le Bourget.

### AT Impact D

#### Climate change is a serious environmental catastrophe that risks extinction—that’s Ferner

**Warming causes extinction—**

(a) Irreversible tipping points—warming will get out of control and kill all oxygen-breathing life

**Dyer 12**

London-based independent journalist, PhD from King's College London, citing UC Berkeley scientists (Gwynne, "Tick, tock to mass extinction date," The Press, 6-19-12, l/n, accessed 8-15-12, mss

Meanwhile, a team of respected scientists warn that life on Earth may be **on the way** to an **irreversible** "**tipping point"**. Sure. Heard that one before, too. Last month one of the world's two leading scientific journals, Nature, published a paper, "Approaching a state shift in Earth's biosphere," pointing out that more than 40 per cent of the Earth's land is already used for human needs. With the human population set to grow by a further two billion by 2050, that figure could soon exceed 50 per cent. "It really will be a new world, biologically, at that point," said the paper's lead author, Professor Anthony Barnofsky of the University of California, Berkeley. But Barnofsky doesn't go into the details of what kind of new world it might be. Scientists hardly ever do in public, for fear of being seen as panic-mongers. Besides, it's a relatively new hypothesis, but it's a pretty convincing one, and it should be more widely understood. Here's how bad it could get. The scientific consensus is that we are still on track for 3 degrees C of warming by 2100, but that's just warming caused by human greenhouse- gas emissions. The problem is that +3 degrees is well past the point where the major feedbacks kick in: natural phenomena triggered by our warming, like melting permafrost and the loss of Arctic sea-ice cover, that will add to the heating and that we cannot turn off. The trigger is actually around 2C (3.5 degrees F) higher average global temperature. After that **we lose control** of the process: ending our own carbon- dioxide emissions would no longer be enough to stop the warming. We may end up trapped on an escalator heading up to +6C (+10.5F), with no way of getting off. And +6C gives you the **mass extinction**. There have been five mass extinctions in the past 500 million years, when 50 per cent or more of the species then existing on the Earth vanished, but until recently the only people taking any interest in this were paleontologists, not climate scientists. They did wonder what had caused the extinctions, but the best answer they could come up was "climate change". It wasn't a very good answer. Why would a warmer or colder planet kill off all those species? The warming was caused by massive volcanic eruptions dumping huge quantities of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere for tens of thousands of years. But it was very gradual and the animals and plants had plenty of time to migrate to climatic zones that still suited them. (That's exactly what happened more recently in the Ice Age, as the glaciers repeatedly covered whole continents and then retreated again.) There had to be a more convincing kill mechanism than that. The paleontologists found one when they discovered that a giant asteroid struck the planet 65 million years ago, just at the time when the dinosaurs died out in the most recent of the great extinctions. So they went looking for evidence of huge asteroid strikes at the time of the other extinction events. They found none. What they discovered was that there was indeed major warming at the time of all the other extinctions - and that the warming had radically changed the oceans. The currents that carry oxygen- rich cold water down to the depths shifted so that they were bringing down oxygen- poor warm water instead, and gradually the depths of the oceans became anoxic: the deep waters no longer had any oxygen. When that happens, the sulfur bacteria that normally live in the silt (because oxygen is poison to them) come out of hiding and begin to multiply. Eventually they rise all the way to the surface over the whole ocean, killing all the oxygen-breathing life. The ocean also starts emitting enormous amounts of lethal hydrogen sulfide gas that destroy the ozone layer and directly poison land- dwelling species. This has happened many times in the Earth's history.

#### (b) Scientific consensus goes neg

**Flournoy 12**

Don Flournoy 12, Citing Feng Hsu, PhD NASA Scientist @ the Goddard Space Flight Center and Don is a PhD and MA from UT, former Dean of the University College @ Ohio University, former Associate Dean at SUNY and Case Institute of Technology, Former Manager for University/Industry Experiments for the NASA ACTS Satellite, currently Professor of Telecommunications @ Scripps College of Communications, Ohio University, “Solar Power Satellites,” January 2012, Springer Briefs in Space Development, p. 10-11

In the Online Journal of Space Communication , Dr. Feng Hsu, a NASA scientist at Goddard Space Flight Center, a research center in the forefront of science of space and Earth, writes, “The evidence of global warming is alarming,” noting the potential for a catastrophic planetary climate change is real and troubling (Hsu 2010 ) . Hsu and his NASA colleagues were engaged in monitoring and analyzing climate changes on a global scale, through which they received first-hand scientific information and data relating to global warming issues, including the dynamics of polar ice cap melting. After discussing this research with colleagues who were world experts on the subject, he wrote: I now have no doubt global temperatures are rising, and that global warming is a serious problem confronting all of humanity. No matter whether these trends are due to human interference or to the cosmic cycling of our solar system, there are two basic facts that are crystal clear: (a) there is overwhelming scientific evidence showing positive correlations between the level of CO2 concentrations in Earth’s atmosphere with respect to the historical fluctuations of global temperature changes; and (b) the overwhelming majority of the world’s scientific community is in agreement about the risks of a potential catastrophic global climate change. That is, if we humans continue to ignore this problem and do nothing, if we continue dumping huge quantities of greenhouse gases into Earth’s biosphere, humanity will be at dire risk (Hsu 2010 ) . As a technology risk assessment expert, Hsu says he can show with some confidence that the planet will face more risk doing nothing to curb its fossil-based energy addictions than it will in making a fundamental shift in its energy supply. “This,” he writes, “is because the risks of a catastrophic anthropogenic climate change can be potentially the extinction of human species, a risk that is simply too high for us to take any chances” (Hsu 2010 ).

#### (c) Resource wars—warming causes them, and they go nuclear

**Klare 8**

Professor of Peace and World Security Studies @ Hampshire College, (Michael, March 10, “The Coming Resource Wars”, [http://www.alternet.org/environment/33243](http://www.alternet.org/environment/33243" \t "_blank))

It's official: the era of resource wars is upon us. In a major London address, British Defense Secretary John Reid warned that global climate change and dwindling natural resources are combining to increase the likelihood of violent conflict over land, water and energy. Climate change, he indicated, "will make scarce resources, clean water, viable agricultural land even scarcer" -- and this will "make the emergence of violent conflict more rather than less likely." Although not unprecedented, Reid's prediction of an upsurge in resource conflict is significant both because of his senior rank and the vehemence of his remarks. "The blunt truth is that the lack of water and agricultural land is a significant contributory factor to the tragic conflict we see unfolding in Darfur," he declared. "We should see this as a warning sign." Resource conflicts of this type are most likely to arise in the developing world, Reid indicated, but the more advanced and affluent countries are not likely to be spared the damaging and destabilizing effects of global climate change. With sea levels rising, water and energy becoming increasingly scarce and prime agricultural lands turning into deserts, internecine warfare over access to vital resources will become a global phenomenon. Reid's speech, delivered at the prestigious Chatham House in London (Britain's equivalent of the Council on Foreign Relations), is but the most recent expression of a growing trend in strategic circles to view environmental and resource effects -- rather than political orientation and ideology -- as the most potent source of armed conflict in the decades to come. With the world population rising, global consumption rates soaring, energy supplies rapidly disappearing and climate change eradicating valuable farmland, the stage is being set for persistent and worldwide struggles over vital resources. Religious and political strife will not disappear in this scenario, but rather will be channeled into contests over valuable sources of water, food and energy. Prior to Reid's address, the most significant expression of this outlook was a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Defense by a California-based consulting firm in October 2003. Entitled "An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security," the report warned that global climate change is more likely to result in sudden, cataclysmic environmental events than a gradual (and therefore manageable) rise in average temperatures. Such events could include a substantial increase in global sea levels, intense storms and hurricanes and continent-wide "dust bowl" effects. This would trigger pitched battles between the survivors of these effects for access to food, water, habitable land and energy supplies. "Violence and disruption stemming from the stresses created by abrupt changes in the climate pose a different type of threat to national security than we are accustomed to today," the 2003 report noted. "Military confrontation may be triggered by a desperate need for natural resources such as energy, food and water rather than by conflicts over ideology, religion or national honor." Until now, this mode of analysis has failed to command the attention of top American and British policymakers. For the most part, they insist that ideological and religious differences -- notably, the clash between values of tolerance and democracy on one hand and extremist forms of Islam on the other -- remain the main drivers of international conflict. But Reid's speech at Chatham House suggests that a major shift in strategic thinking may be under way. Environmental perils may soon dominate the world security agenda. This shift is due in part to the growing weight of evidence pointing to a significant human role in altering the planet's basic climate systems. Recent studies showing the rapid shrinkage of the polar ice caps, the accelerated melting of North American glaciers, the increased frequency of severe hurricanes and a number of other such effects all suggest that dramatic and potentially harmful changes to the global climate have begun to occur. More importantly, they conclude that human behavior -- most importantly, the burning of fossil fuels in factories, power plants, and motor vehicles -- is the most likely cause of these changes. This assessment may not have yet penetrated the White House and other bastions of head-in-the-sand thinking, but it is clearly gaining ground among scientists and thoughtful analysts around the world.For the most part, public discussion of global climate change has tended to describe its effects as an environmental problem -- as a threat to safe water, arable soil, temperate forests, certain species and so on. And, of course, climate change is a potent threat to the environment; in fact, the greatest threat imaginable. But viewing climate change as an environmental problem fails to do justice to the magnitude of the peril it poses. As Reid's speech and the 2003 Pentagon study make clear, the greatest danger posed by global climate change is not the degradation of ecosystems per se, but rather the disintegration of entire human societies, producing wholesale starvation, mass migrations and recurring conflict over resources. "As famine, disease, and weather-related disasters strike due to abrupt climate change," the Pentagon report notes, "many countries' needs will exceed their carrying capacity" -- that is, their ability to provide the minimum requirements for human survival. This "will create a sense of desperation, which is likely to lead to offensive aggression" against countries with a greater stock of vital resources. "Imagine eastern European countries, struggling to feed their populations with a falling supply of food, water, and energy, eyeing Russia, whose population is already in decline, for access to its grain, minerals, and energy supply." Similar scenarios will be replicated all across the planet, as those without the means to survival invade or migrate to those with greater abundance -- producing endless struggles between resource "haves" and "have-nots." It is this prospect, more than anything, that worries John Reid. In particular, he expressed concern over the inadequate capacity of poor and unstable countries to cope with the effects of climate change, and the resulting risk of state collapse, civil war and mass migration. "More than 300 million people in Africa currently lack access to safe water," he observed, and "climate change will worsen this dire situation" -- provoking more wars like Darfur. And even if these social disasters will occur primarily in the developing world, the wealthier countries will also be caught up in them, whether by participating in peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations, by fending off unwanted migrants or by fighting for access to overseas supplies of food, oil, and minerals.When reading of these nightmarish scenarios, it is easy to conjure up images of desperate, starving people killing one another with knives, staves and clubs -- as was certainly often the case in the past, and could easily prove to be so again. But these scenarios also envision the use of more deadly weapons. "In this world of warring states," the 2003 Pentagon report predicted, "nuclear arms proliferation is inevitable." As oil and natural gas disappears, more and more countries will rely on nuclear power to meet their energy needs -- and this "will accelerate nuclear proliferation as countries develop enrichment and reprocessing capabilities to ensure their national security." Although speculative, these reports make one thing clear: when thinking about the calamitous effects of global climate change, we must emphasize its social and political consequences as much as its purely environmental effects. Drought, flooding and storms can kill us, and surely will -- but so will wars among the survivors of these catastrophes over what remains of food, water and shelter. As Reid's comments indicate, no society, however affluent, will escape involvement in these forms of conflict.

### AT Small-Scale Impacts 1st

#### An impact is probability times magnitude—we have to prioritize existential threats, even if the risk is small—

#### First—cognitive biases

#### We’re cognitively biased to underweight distant future risks

**Marcus 13**

Gary Marcus (cognitive scientist). “Unknown Unknowns.” 2013: What Should We Be Worried About? 2013. <http://edge.org/responses/q2013>

There are known knowns and known unknowns, but what we should be worried about most is the unknown unknowns. Not because they are the most serious risks we face, but because psychology tells us that unclear risks that are in the distant future are the **risks we are less likely to take seriously enough.** At least four distinct psychological mechanisms are at work. First, **we are moved more by vivid information**, than by abstract information (even when the abstract information should in principle dominate). Second, **we discount the future**, rushing for the dollar now as opposed to the two dollars we could have a year later if we waited. Third, **the focusing illusion** (itself perhaps driven by the more general phenomenon of priming) tends to make us dwell on our most immediate problems, even if more serious problems loom in the background. Fourth, we have a **tendency to believe in a just world**, in which nature naturally rights itself. These four mechanisms likely derive from different sources, some stemming from systems that govern motivation (future discounting), others from systems that mediate pleasure (belief in a just world), others from the structure of our memory (the focusing illusion, and the bias from vividness). Whatever their source, the four together create a potent psychological drive for us to underweight distant future risks that we cannot fully envision. Climate change is a case in point. In 1975, the Columbia University geochemist Wallace S. Broecker wrote an important and prescient article called "Climatic Change: Are We on the Brink of a Pronounced Global Warming?", but his worries were ignored for decades, in part because many people presumed, fallaciously, that nature would somehow automatically set itself right. (And, in keeping with people's tendency to draw their inference primarily from vivid information, a well-crafted feature film on climate change played a significant role in gathering public attention, arguably far more so than the original article in Science.) Oxford philosopher Nick Bostrom has pointed out that the three greatest unknowns we should be worry about are biotechnology, nanotechnology, and the rise of machines that are more intelligent than human beings. Each sounds like science fiction, and has in fact been portrayed in science fiction, but each poses genuine threats. Bostrom's posits "existential risks": possible, if unlikely, calamities, that would wipe out our entire species, much as asteroids appear to have extinguished dinosaurs. Importantly, many of these risks, in his judgment, exceed the existential risk of other concerns that occupy a considerably greater share of public attention. Climate change, may be more likely, and certainly is more vivid, but is less likely to lead to the complete extinction of the human species (even though it could conceivably kill a significant fraction of us). The truth is that we simply don't know enough about the potential biotechnology, nanotechonology, or future iterations of artificial intelligence to calculate what their risks are, compelling arguments have been made that in principle any of the three could lead to human extinction. These risks may prove manageable, but I don't think we can manage them if we don't take them seriously. In the long run, biotech, nanotech and AI are probably significantly more likely to help the species, by increasing productivity and limiting disease, than they are to destroy it. But we need to invest more in figuring out exactly what the risks are, and to better prepare for then. Right now, the US spends more than $2.5 billion dollars a year studying climate change, but (by my informal reckoning) less than 1% of that total studying the risk of biotech, nanotech, and AI. What we really should be worried about is that **we are not quite doing enough to prepare for the unknown.**

#### Scope insensitivity is an additional cognitive bias that leads us to ignore magnitude

**Bostrom 13**

Nick Bostrom (faculty of philosophy, University of Oxford). “Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority.” Global Policy, Vol. 4, Issue 1. 2013. http://www.existential-risk.org/concept.pdf

Mitigation of existential risk is hampered by a lack of understanding, but also by a deficit of motivation. Existential risk mitigation is a global public good (i.e., non-excludable and non-rivalrous), and economic theory suggests that such goods tend to be undersupplied by the market, since each producer of existential safety (even if the producer is a large nation) could capture only a small portion of the value (Feldman, 1980; Kaul, 1999). In fact, the situation is worse than is the case with many other global public goods in that existential risk reduction is a strongly transgenerational (in fact, pan-generational) public good: even a world state may capture only a small fraction of the benefits—those accruing to currently existing people. The quadrillions of happy people who may come to exist in the future if we avoid existential catastrophe would be willing to pay the present generation astronomical sums in return for a slight increase in our efforts to preserve humanity’s future, but the mutually beneficial trade is unfortunately prevented by the obvious transaction difficulties. Moral motivations, too, may fail to measure up to the magnitude of what is at stake. The scope insensitivity of our moral sentiments is likely to be especially pronounced when very large numbers are involved: Substantially larger numbers, such as 500 million deaths, and especially qualitatively different scenarios such as the extinction of the entire human species, seem to trigger a different mode of thinking—enter into a ‘separate magisterium’. People who would never dream of hurting a child hear of an existential risk, and say, ‘Well, maybe the human species doesn’t really deserve to survive’. (Yudkowsky, 2008, p. 114)

**Second—future generations**

**Even the tiniest risk of extinction outweighs because of the sheer number of potential future people**

**Bostrom 13**

Nick Bostrom (faculty of philosophy, University of Oxford). “Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority.” Global Policy, Vol. 4, Issue 1. 2013. http://www.existential-risk.org/concept.pdf

But even this reflection fails to bring out the seriousness of existential risk. What makes existential catastrophes especially bad is not that they would show up robustly on a plot like the one in figure 3, causing a precipitous drop in world population or average quality of life. Instead, their significance lies primarily in the fact that **they would destroy the future**. The philosopher Derek Parfit made a similar point with the following thought experiment: I believe that if we destroy mankind, as we now can, this outcome will be much *worse* than most people think. Compare three outcomes: (1) Peace. (2) A nuclear war that kills 99% of the world's existing population. (3) A nuclear war that kills 100%. (2) would be worse than (1), and (3) would be worse than (2). Which is the greater of these two differences? Most people believe that the greater difference is between (1) and (2). I believe that the difference between (2) and (3) is very much greater. ... The Earth will remain habitable for at least another billion years. Civilization began only a few thousand years ago. If we do not destroy mankind, these few thousand years may be only a tiny fraction of the whole of civilized human history. The difference between (2) and (3) may thus be the difference between this tiny fraction and all of the rest of this history. If we compare this possible history to a day, what has occurred so far is only a fraction of a second. (Parfit 1984, pp. 453-454). To calculate the loss associated with an existential catastrophe, we must consider how much value would come to exist in its absence. It turns out that the ultimate potential for Earth-originating intelligent life is literally astronomical. One gets a large number even if one confines one's consideration to the potential for biological human beings living on Earth. If we suppose with Parfit that our planet will remain habitable for at least another billion years, and we assume that at least one billion people could live on it sustainably, then the potential exist for at least 1016 human lives of normal duration. **These lives could also be considerably better than the average contemporary human life, which is so often marred by disease, poverty, injustice,** and various biological limitations that could be partly overcome through continuing technological and moral progress. However, the relevant figure is not how many people could live on Earth but how many descendants we could have in total. One lower bound of the number of biological human life-years in the future accessible universe (based on current cosmological estimates) is 1034 years.7 Another estimate, which assumes that future minds will be mainly implemented in computational hardware instead of biological neuronal wetware, **produces a lower bound of 1054 human-brain-emulation subjective life-years** (or 1071 basic computational operations) (Bostrom 2003).8 If we make the less conservative assumption that future civilizations could eventually press close to the absolute bounds of known physics (using some as yet unimagined technology), we get radically higher estimates of the amount of computation and memory storage that is achievable and thus of the number of years of subjective experience that could be realized.9 Even if we use the most conservative of these estimates, which entirely ignores the possibility of space colonization and software minds, we find that the expected loss of an existential catastrophe is greater than the value of 1016 human lives. This implies that the expected value of reducing existential risk by a mere one millionth of one percentage point is at least a hundred times the value of a million human lives. The more technologically comprehensive estimate of 1054 human-brain-emulation subjective life-years (or 1052 lives of ordinary length) makes the same point even more starkly. Even if we give this allegedly lower bound on the cumulative output potential of a technologically mature civilization a mere 1% chance of being correct, we find that **the expected value of reducing existential risk by a mere one billionth of one billionth of one percentage point is worth a hundred billion times as much as a billion human lives.** One might consequently argue that even the tiniest reduction of existential risk has an expected value greater than that of the definite provision of any "ordinary" good, such as the direct benefit of saving 1 billion lives. And, further, that the absolute value of the *indirect* effect of saving 1 billion lives on the total cumulative amount of existential risk — positive or negative — is almost certainly larger than the positive value of the direct benefit of such an action.10

#### And third—risk assessment

#### Focusing on low-probability, high magnitude scenarios is key to accurate risk assessment in the modern world

**Connor 13**

Steve Connor (Science Editor of The Independent. He has won many awards for his journalism, including five-times winner of the prestigious British science writers’ award; the David Perlman Award of the American Geophysical Union; twice commended as specialist journalist of the year in the UK Press Awards; UK health journalist of the year and a special merit award of the European School of Oncology for his investigative journalism. He has a degree in zoology from the University of Oxford and has a special interest in genetics and medical science, human evolution and origins, climate change and the environment). “Stephen Hawking's on the team - but why no Bruce Willis? World’s biggest brains get together to work out how to save us all from the end of the world.” The Independent. September 12th, 2013. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/stephen-hawkings-on-the-team--but-why-no-bruce-willis-worlds-biggest-brains-get-together-to-work-out-how-to-save-us-all-from-the-end-of-the-world-8812919.html>

Some of Britain’s finest minds are drawing up a “doomsday list” of catastrophic events that could devastate the world, pose a threat to civilisation and might even lead to the extinction of the human species. Leading scholars have established a centre for the study of “existential risk” which aims to present politicians and the public with a list of disasters that could threaten the future of the world as we know it. Lord Rees of Ludlow, the astronomer royal and past president of the Royal Society, is leading the initiative, which includes Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge cosmologist, and Lord May of Oxford, a former government chief scientist. The group also includes the Cambridge philosopher Huw Price, the economist Partha Dasgupta and the Harvard evolutionary geneticist George Church. Initial funding has come from Jaan Tallinn, the co-founder of Skype. “Many scientists are concerned that developments in human technology may soon pose new, extinction-level risks to our species as a whole,” says a statement on the group’s website. Lord Rees said in his closing speech to the British Science Festival in Newcastle this evening that the public and politicians need the best possible advice on low-risk scenarios that may suddenly become reality, with devastating consequences. “Those of us fortunate enough to live in the developed world fret too much about minor hazards of everyday life: improbable air crashes, carcinogens in food, low radiation doses, and so forth,” Lord Rees told the meeting. “But we are less secure than we think. It seems to me that our political masters, should worry far more about scenarios that have thankfully not yet happened – events that could arise as unexpectedly as the 2008 financial crisis, but which could cause world-wide disruption,” he said. Professor David Spiegelhalter, an expert in risk at Cambridge University, said that our increasing reliance on technology and the formation of complex interconnected networks is making society more vulnerable. “We use interconnected systems for everything from power, to food supply and banking, which means there can be real trouble if things go wrong or they are sabotaged,” Professor Spiegelhalter said. “In a modern, efficient world, we no longer stockpile food. If the supply is disrupted for any reason, it would take about 48-hours before it runs out and riots begin,” he said. “Energy security is also an issue, as we import much of our fuel from abroad, so a conflict over resources in the future is possible,” he added. According to Lord Rees, the threat of nuclear war was the main global risk we faced in the last century, but in the fast-developing 21st Century there are new concerns over risks such as deadly bioterrorist attacks, pandemics accelerated by global air travel, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and artificially intelligent computers that turn hostile. “In future decades, events with low probability but catastrophic consequences may loom high on the political agenda,” Lord Rees told the science festival. “That’s why some of us in Cambridge - both natural and social scientists - plan, with colleagues at Oxford and elsewhere, to inaugurate a research programme to compile a more complete register of these existential risks, and to assess how to enhance resilience against the more credible ones,” he said. The Cambridge Centre for the Study of Existential Risk is so far a loose coalition of scholars but Lord Rees hopes later this year to announce major funding and a more detailed programme of research into the “doomsday” scenarios. “Our goal is to steer a small fraction of Cambridge’s great intellectual resources, and of the reputation built on its past and present scientific pre-eminence, to the task of ensuring that our own species has a long-term future,” the centre states on its website. Lord Rees, who has written popular science books on 21st Century threats to humanity, said that the organisational aspect of the centre is still being finalised but he hopes to have this clarified by the end of the year. “The response we've had to our proposal has been remarkably wide, and remarkably positive. The project is still embryonic but we are seeking funds via various sources and have strengthened our international advisory network,” he told The Independent. There is a need for a more rational approach to the low risk events that could have devastating consequence because politicians tend to think of short-term problems and solutions while the public is in denial about scenarios that have not yet happened, he said. “The wide public is in denial about two kinds of threats: those that we’re causing collectively to the biosphere, and those that stem from the greater vulnerability of our interconnected world to error or terror induced by individuals or small groups,” Lord Rees said. “All too often the focus is parochial and short term. We downplay what’s happening even now in impoverished, far-away countries and we discount too heavily the problems we’ll leave for our grandchildren,” he said.

## GOP Bad—Extra

### Unions

#### GOP kills unions—unions are key to solve income inequality

**McElwee 15**

Sean McElwee (staff writer). “Unions still matter.” Al Jazeera America. April 15th, 2015. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/4/why-unions-matter.html>

This year the Republican war on unions has returned with a vengeance. In former labor stronghold Illinois, GOP Gov. Bruce Rauner is pursuing right-to-work legislation — which allows workers to gain the benefits of union representation without paying dues — and looks likely to succeed. Wisconsin became a right-to-work state last month, and its Republican Gov. Scott Walker looks set to ground a presidential bid in union busting, recently saying his political fight with unions prepared him to take on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Supreme Court appears ready to overrule its Abood v. Detroit Board of Education decision, which allows unions to collect dues from nonmember public sector workers who nonetheless benefit from collective bargaining. With the enemies at the gate, the liberal elite seems to have finally learned to love unions. Nicholas Kristof writes that, contrary to his earlier opinion, “we should strengthen unions, not try to eviscerate them.” Former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, a key architect of Bill Clinton’s finance-friendly economic policy, recently argued, “Measures that facilitate collective bargaining can result in a broader participation in the benefits of productivity and growth.” And in “The Report of the Commission on Inclusive Prosperity,” which is likely to become the centerpiece of Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, the commission, co-chaired by Ed Balls and Lawrence Summers, concludes that “we need to support the growth of unions.” But it may be too little, too late. Democrats did little to defend unions when it counted. Under President Jimmy Carter, Alfred Kahn began deregulating the airlines. Carter then signed into law legislation deregulating railroads and trucking (both hobbling powerful unions). President Bill Clinton pushed for the North American Free Trade Agreement against union opposition and deregulated finance, greatly empowering capital. To be fair, some of these pressures came from global trends, but public policy played a key role in tilting the field against labor. Now Republicans are fighting to drive a final spike in the heart of the most effective anti-inequality movement in history. If liberals do nothing to shore up unions, their decline will only continue. That will have important implications for inequality. What unions do Unions not only give their members a voice at work but also can have much broader political effects. By mobilizing voters and contributing to campaigns, organized labor is in effect the only lobbying group operating in the interest of ordinary Americans. In a 1998 study, political scientists Benjamin Radcliff and Martin Saiz found that “the relative strength of the labor movement across the American states is one of the principal determinants of policy liberalism.” They found that the rate of unionization has a dramatic effects on spending for Aid to Families With Dependent Children and education as well as on tax progressivity and that these effects are stronger than Democratic governors and Democratic legislatures. As Radcliff told me, “strong labor unions are able to influence public policy, so as to create programs … that benefit everyone in society, not merely organized workers.” One way unions reduced inequality was by boosting voter turnout, which gave them political leverage. It’s rarely noted, but the campaign for Seattle’s $15 minimum hourly wage could not have succeeded without a massive, union-led voter registration drive. Many studies have confirmed that unions boost voter turnout and that their Election Day mobilizations push candidates and parties to the left. In a country where few politicians come from a blue collar background, unions have often been a conduit for workers to enter politics. Political scientist Nicholas Carnes found that “a 10-point increase in the percentage of the state that belonged to labor unions was associated with a 1-point increase in the percentage of state lawmakers from the working class.” Given that politicians’ occupational background and wealth influences their voting behavior, this is another important way unions can promote policies beneficial to the working and middle classes. The right-to-work revolution But unions have always faced deep opposition, especially in the South, where many of the first right-to-work laws were passed. Historian Elizabeth Shermer writes, “The central message in the Southern right-to-work campaigns was preserving the Old South’s racial order.” Southern elites feared that an organized working class would be a threat to the racist social and economic practices that had long defined the region. They successfully kept collective bargaining at bay with laws that forbade unions from requiring beneficiaries of its negotiations to become members and pay dues. These right-to-work laws appealed to non-elites by channeling widely held anti-government individualism. But labor law expert Raymond Hogler notes that the question has often been posed in deceptive terms: Many polls show a strong majority of Americans are against making workers pay union dues to keep a job. That’s the wrong question. When workers in a union are asked whether anybody benefitting from a collective bargaining agreement should pay dues to support the agreement, they say yes. As right-to-work laws spread from the South to the rest of the country, the results have been devastating. A paper by Holger, Steven Schulman and Stephan Weiler shows that right-to-work states have seen an 8.8 percent decrease in union density and that these laws account for slightly more than three-quarters of the difference in union density across states. Another study found that from 1989 to 2002, whether a state had a right-to-work law was more important than partisan control of the state government in determining the progressiveness or regressiveness of the state’s taxes. This conclusion holds up at the global level, according to a recent International Monetary Fund study showing that lower unionization rates were associated with an increase in the share of income going to the top 10 percent of the population. Political actors The importance of these studies is clear: Unions are the most important institution in the fight against inequality. But for too long, many liberals seemed happy to watch unions disappear. Part of the problem is that they misunderstood unions as primarily economic institutions, interested in parochially negotiating wages and benefits for their members. In reality, unions are far more important as political actors promoting policies that benefit the working class and middle class as a whole. As legendary United Auto Workers leader Walter Reuther put it in 1970: "There’s a direct relationship between the ballot box and the breadbox, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls." It’s nice that the Kristofs and Summerses of the world have finally caught up with Reuther. We can only hope it is not too late.

#### Income inequality kills soft power

**Stiglitz 14**

Joseph Stiglitz (Roosevelt Institute Senior Fellow and Chief Economist). “Why Inequality Matters and What Can Be Done About It.” Next New Deal, blog of the Roosevelt Institute. April 1st, 2014. <http://www.nextnewdeal.net/stiglitz-why-inequality-matters-and-what-can-be-done-about-it>

Sixth, we pay a high price for this inequality, in terms of our democracy and nature of our society. A divided society is different—it doesn't function as well. Our democracy is undermined, as economic inequality inevitably translates into political inequality. I describe in my book how the outcomes of America’s politics are increasingly better described as the result of a system not of one person one vote but of one dollar one vote. One of the prices we pay for the extremes to which inequality has grown and the nature of inequality in America—both inequality in outcomes and inequalities of opportunities—is that we have a weaker economy. Greater inequality leads to lower growth and more instability. These ideas now have become mainstream: even the IMF has embraced them. We used to think of there being a trade-off: we could achieve more equality, but only at the expense of giving up on overall economic performance. Now we realize that, especially given the extremes of inequality achieved in the US and the manner in which it is generated, greater equality and improved economic performance are complements. This is especially true if we focus on appropriate measures of growth, focusing not on what is happening on average, or to those at the top, but how the economy is performing for the typical American, reflected for instance in median income. For too many—perhaps even a majority—the American economy has not been delivering. And if our economy is not delivering, it not only hurts our people, it undermines our position of leadership in the world: will other countries want to emulate an economic system in which most individuals’ incomes are simply stagnating?

**Soft power solves every impact**

**Hamre 7**

John Hamre (specialist in international studies, a former Washington government official and President and CEO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a position he has held with that think tank since January, 2000). “Restoring America’s Inspirational Leadership.” Forward, CSIS Commission on Smart Power, co-chairs Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, Jr. 2007. http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/071106\_csissmartpowerreport.pdf

There is a moment of opportunity today for our political leaders to strike off on a big idea that balances a wiser internationalism with the desire for protection at home. Washington may be increasingly divided, but Americans are unified in wanting to **improve their country’s image** in the world and their own potential for good. We see the same hunger in other countries for a more balanced American approach and revitalized American interest in a broader range of issues than just terrorism. And we hear everywhere that any serious problem in the world demands U.S. involvement. Of course, we all know the challenges before us. The center of gravity in world affairs is shifting to Asia. The threat America faces from **nuclear proliferation, terrorist organizations with global reach, and weak and reckless states cannot be easily contained** and is unlikely to diminish in our lifetime. As the only global superpower, we must manage multiple crises simultaneously while regional competitors can focus their attention and efforts. A globalized world means that vectors of prosperity can quickly become vectors of insecurity. These challenges put a premium on strengthening capable states, alliances, partnerships, and institutions. In this complex and dynamic world of changing demands, we greatly benefit from having help in managing problems. But we can no longer afford to see the world through only a state’s narrow perspective. Statehood can be a fiction that hides dangers lurking beneath. We need new strategies that allow us to contend with non-state actors and new capabilities to address faceless threats—like **energy insecurity, global financial instability, climate change, pandemic disease**—that know no borders. We need methods and institutions that can adapt to new sources of power and grievance almost certain to arise. Military power is typically the bedrock of a nation’s power. It is understandable that during a time of war we place primary emphasis on military might. But we have learned during the past five years that this is an inadequate basis for sustaining American power over time. America’s power draws just as much from the size of its population and the strength of its economy as from the vitality of our civic culture and the excellence of our ideas. These other attributes of power become the more important dimensions. A year ago, we approached two of our trustees—Joe Nye and Rich Armitage—to chair a CSIS Commission on Smart Power, with the goal of issuing a report one year before the 2008 elections. We imposed the deadline for two reasons. First, we still have a year with the Bush presidency wherein these important initiatives can be furthered. Second, looking ahead to the next presidency, we sought to place before candidates of both parties a set of ideas that would strengthen America’s international standing. This excellent commission has combined that essential American attribute—outlining a truly big idea and identifying practical, tangible actions that would help implement the idea. How does America become the welcomed world leader for a constructive international agenda for the twenty-first century? How do we restore the full spectrum of our national power? How do we become a smart power? This report identifies a series of specific actions we recommend to set us on that path. CSIS’s strength has always been its deep roots in Washington’s defense and security establishment. The nature of security today is that we need to conceive of it more broadly than at any time before. As the commission’s report rightly states, “Today’s central question is not simply whether we are capturing or killing more terrorists than are being recruited and trained, but whether we are providing more opportunities than our enemies can destroy and whether we are addressing more grievances than they can record.” There is nothing weak about this approach. It is pragmatic, optimistic, and quite frankly, American. We were twice victims on 9/11. Initially we were victimized by the terrorists who flew airplanes into buildings and killed American citizens and foreigners resident in this country. But we victimized ourselves the second time by losing our national confidence and optimism. The values inherent in our Constitution, educational institutions, economic system, and **role as respected leader on the world stage** are too widely admired for emerging leaders abroad to turn away for good. By becoming a smarter power, we could bring them back sooner. What is required, though, is not only leadership that will keep Americans safe from another attack, but leadership that can communicate to Americans and the world that the safety and prosperity of others matters to the United States. The Commission on Smart Power members have spoken to such a confident, inspiring, and practical vision. I am sure they will not be the last.

### Disease

**GOP win causes repeal of Obamacare.**

**Baksh et al 15**

Mariam Baksh, Philip Lewis, and Ruby Mellen (staff writers). “Here's What The First 100 Days Of A GOP Presidency Could Look Like.” December 21, 2015. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/gop-presidency-100-days\_565dd5a6e4b08e945fecad06> Accessed: 12/21/15 RJS

Repeal Obamacare. After two years of sign-ups following the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, more than 16 million people now have health insurance who didn’t have it before. But every GOP candidate except Ohio Gov. John Kasich has promised to repeal Obamacare -- though for the most part, they've been pretty vague about what would take its place. “[I'd] figure out a way to repeal Obamacare,” former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said at a roundtable in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, this May, responding to a question about actions he’d take in his first 100 days. “I think repealing Obamacare and replacing it with a 21st-century consumer-directed, patient-driven health care insurance system has to be a high, high priority.”

**ACA rollback causes disease**

**Mason 8**

Vanessa Mason-public health Yale, <http://vanessamason.wordpress.com/2008/08/16/universal-health-care-series-the-national-security-argument/> , 8/16/8

Fences and security checkpoints versus pathogens. David versus Goliath. While it seems that one side has the brute strength and power to counter the other, we all know how the second conflict ends. The flu epidemic of 1918 killed one-fifth of the world’s population in about two years, resulting in more deaths from the epidemic than World War I. Our interconnected society makes epidemics more likely to occur with the ease of mobility within countries and in between them. A recent epidemic scare happened in 2007 when Andrew Speaker, after receiving a diagnosis of drug-resistant tuberculosis, proceeded to travel overseas and back on commercial flights for his wedding and honeymoon. Speaker was already out of the country when before authorities realized that he was infected with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, which is the most difficult strain to treat. Fortunately, no one was infected; also fortunately, Speaker was diagnosed and authorities were informed that he was infected. Imagine what could have happened if Speaker could not have seen a doctor. MRSA and other “superbugs” are becoming increasingly frequent. Avian flu and pandemic flu are also looming biological dangers. Imagine a situation where a patient has a bacterial infection but never goes to see a doctor because they can not afford the visit. The patient would continue to pass through the general population, infecting others. Public health officials would have greater difficulty finding the source of the infection because there would be so many more cases. Imagine a situation where a patient actually sees a doctor, but in a crowded emergency room. The doctor, overwhelmed with cases, quickly diagnoses the bacterial infection and prescribes penicillin. The patient takes the medication, but the bacteria becomes resistant to penicillin. His condition worsens and he can spread a drug-resistant strain to others. Imagine a situation caused that as a byproduct of his socioeconomic status, the patient lives in conditions that are ripe for the spread of infections: close quarters and poor ventilation. Poverty also compromises the strength of one’s immune system, leaving the body open to infections and once infected, the body can not fight infections well. 1) Universal health care provides a greater likelihood of early detection to curb infections before they grow too quickly. Early detection is a key advantage in controlling epidemics and preventing deaths. Earlier detection also helps to reduce the likelihood that drug-resistant strains develop in the general population. 2) Increasing access to health care allows health care professionals to identify patients at risk and intervene to offer ways to reduce the risk of infection. 3) Universal health care enables consistent access to proper treatment. Treating infections with the wrong medication or with an insufficient dosage can cause the pathogen to mutate, creating drug-resistant strains. Preventing epidemics should be a priority of paramount concern if the government actually wants to ensure national security. Implementing universal health care is an important step in the right direction.

#### Unchecked disease spread causes extinction

**Yu 9**

Victoria, “Human Extinction: The Uncertainty of Our Fate,” Dartmouth Journal of Undergraduate Science, May 22, <http://dujs.dartmouth.edu/spring-2009/human-extinction-the-uncertainty-of-our-fate>

In the past, humans have indeed fallen victim to viruses. Perhaps the best-known case was the bubonic plague that killed up to one third of the European population in the mid-14th century (7). While vaccines have been developed for the plague and some other infectious diseases, new viral strains are constantly emerging — a process that maintains the possibility of a pandemic-facilitated human extinction**.** Some surveyed students mentioned AIDS as a potential pandemic-causing virus.  It is true that scientists have been unable thus far to find a sustainable cure for AIDS, mainly due to HIV’s rapid and constant evolution. Specifically, two factors account for the virus’s abnormally high mutation rate: 1. HIV’s use of reverse transcriptase, which does not have a proof-reading mechanism, and 2. the lack of an error-correction mechanism in HIV DNA polymerase (8). Luckily, though, there are certain characteristics of HIV that make it a poor candidate for a large-scale global infection: HIV can lie dormant in the human body for years without manifesting itself, and AIDS itself does not kill directly, but rather through the weakening of the immune system.  However, for more easily transmitted viruses such as influenza, the evolution of new strains could prove far more consequential. The simultaneous occurrence of antigenic drift (point mutations that lead to new strains) and antigenic shift (the inter-species transfer of disease) in the influenza virus could produce a new version of influenza for which scientists may not immediately find a cure. Since influenza can spread quickly, this lag time could potentially lead to a “global influenza pandemic,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (9). The most recent scare of this variety came in 1918 when bird flu managed to kill over 50 million people around the world in what is sometimes referred to as the Spanish flu pandemic. Perhaps even more frightening is the fact that only 25 mutations were required to convert the original viral strain — which could only infect birds — into a human-viable strain (10).